

Staying Healthy During a Pandemic

What is a pandemic?

A pandemic is a global outbreak of any disease that is new to a community, spreads easily from person-to-person and causes serious illness and death.

How can I protect myself before or during a pandemic?

- To avoid getting ill, take common sense precautions.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or sanitizer.
- To keep your immune system strong, exercise, eat healthy foods and get plenty of rest.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Stop smoking.
- Decrease your stress level.
- Do not share personal items with anyone, even family members.
- Avoid large crowds or close contact with people who are ill.

How can I protect myself if a family member becomes ill?

- Do not share personal items or drinks.
- Wash your hands after caring for the family member.
- Wash your hands after handling items that have come in contact with the family member.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Clean surfaces around the ill person frequently with a detergent cleanser.
- Clean common surfaces such as doorknobs, faucets, light switches and the telephone.

How can I protect my family if I become ill?

Keep your germs to yourself.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or sneeze into the crook of your elbow.
- Discard used tissues in the trash.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water.
- Dry your hands on disposable towels rather than sharing a towel with family members.
- Stay home if you have a cough and fever.
- Contact your health care provider and follow their instructions.

Should I wear a face mask?

If you are ill, wearing a face mask while in your health care provider's office will help you avoid spreading your germs to others.

Should I go out in public during a pandemic?

Public health authorities will provide you with specific guidelines during a pandemic. However, there are things you can do now to prepare, in case you are unable to leave your home during a pandemic.

- Talk to your employer about the possibility of working from home.
- Create a savings account in case you are unable to work for a period of time.
- Talk to your child's teacher about ways to stay current on lessons and homework.
- Be sure you have enough supplies at home to sustain you and your family for approximately 10 days.

What supplies should I keep at home?

- Keep enough food and water to last 10 days.
- Have on hand prescription medications, comfort medicines, first-aid supplies and a thermometer.
- Stash back paper towels, tissues, trash bags, hand soap and bleach.